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## Three Poems

Sara Nicholson

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# THREE POEMS

Sara Nicholson

HELLO

He begins his poem by looking  
 Out a window, but ends his memoir  
 With a basket of fruit. He calls  
 His work an allegory, so this means  
 That I am the basket and the window  
 Pane is god. Objects never die  
 So long as we don't break them,  
 Don't disrupt them. I axed up the roses  
 And left my shovel with the higher-ups.  
 I was taught as a child to believe  
 In my own death, to conceptualize  
 The lightly-falling snow as tokens  
 To be placed, in my mind, beside  
 The fallen-on branches, the fallen-on tree,  
 The fallen-on Honda Civic EX whose  
 Red exterior resembled the exterior  
 Of the fallen-on male cardinal.  
 Snow = death one of my students wrote  
 But I did not write that there are no  
 Equal signs, that there will be no dying,  
 At least for me. Thinking that  
 My friend Michael will someday  
 Turn back into a fawn, and that I will  
 Be there to witness it, that he will  
 Witness my own transfiguration.  
 If snow = necklaces then death  
 Would be my throat as the snow  
 (the necklace) surrounds it. And if snow  
 Were a vibrator, death would be  
 The way the weather climaxes next to  
 You's strap-on and I's excursus—the you  
 And I of this poem. There is no truth

Outside the fact that when I open  
 A window, my books curl up from  
 The humidity. The snow is tired, the rain  
 Exhausted by our catalog of symbols,  
 Our images. Geologically speaking,  
 Grain was domesticated one minute  
 Before my husband bought beer  
 At Krauser's for us to drink on our porch.  
 In the Paleolithic, they used cemeteries  
 As gardens, or vice versa, though  
 People today prefer to separate  
 Their vegetables from bones. Yes,  
 There is no truth, so when I say "those birds"  
 I mean "I don't think I will die"  
 Though if I do I'd choose asphyxiation  
 For the romance the word suggests.  
 We are mortal (they say) yet we  
 Continue to check our Facebooks  
 In the hope that our words will  
 Somehow metamorphose into starlings,  
 That our words could "have wings."  
 I wanted to speak in parables so simple  
 Even my students could fathom.  
 I wanted to dumb you down  
 With snow. You = whatever the snow  
 Will fall on. I = a basket of fruit.  
 The poem = a way to greet you. We =  
 Those birds, those birds, those birds.

## THE WONDERS OF THE MODERN WORLD

I can think of other words for evening  
 Than the ones we use. I began

To list them and, in the beginning  
 I wrote something small:

You carved runes

Onto a sea-smooth plane.

I don't  
Know what I am.

But the "I" and "you" were placeholders  
For figures far immenser than

The idea of "us." Only ciphers  
Of emotion. The I and you

That poets use. I grew tired  
Of crowdsourcing the weather

To find out what the rain is.  
And I grew tired of etching for you

The contours of a shaft of light  
As if to see the world as it is

Were to peek at the complexities  
Of some red-petalled flower

And to think nothing evil, to think  
Thoughts about nothing at all.

The sun performs the scene  
Of a scene being performed.

The stock market does the same shit  
Each morning and my pink fur coat

Comes in S, M, L, XL.  
I remember the morning

You carved runes  
Onto a sea-smooth plane.

I don't  
Know what I am

Though I know I felt happy when I  
Smoked the resin from a dead pine.

You said that negativity's more  
Honest when it comes to art,

That we write with the same aims  
The seneschals had when they

Cursed the master craftsmen.  
I don't know what you are

Though, when I say "you." You  
Wanted to live after the death

Of the internet in a thatched-roof  
Cottage in some fen or heath.

But I was thinking of how dirty  
The children who'd actually live

In the cottages of our imaginations  
And how false our visions

Of the Middle Ageses must be.  
By dirt, I mean domestic life

By which of course, I mean women.  
The dirty ones who sang poems

Since they couldn't, the women,  
At least, in all likelihood, read.

How empty to condense a life into  
Fourteen lines of imperfect meter

And call it art. Here's a quatrain  
From the sonnet I never wrote you:

Just because you're not surprised  
When a blue jay drops the mic

At sunset, or when the police  
Put the idea of money on repeat

But I couldn't figure out the lines  
That'd come before and after, how

To connect the "doesn't mean that"  
To the "just because you're."

What do we know about the sun?  
Hit singeth. And what do we know

About the author? Only that  
Having spent most of her life

Off I-95, she couldn't tell lawns from  
Those more ambient landscapes,

The proverbs of arcadia from facts  
Within the fiction of the ode.

#### HE WAS ALREADY DEAD

All my love letters are written  
in sans serif fonts.

When I lick the envelopes  
the vines on my mirror turn black.

A still life is painted at the center  
of the earth, and some think of iron

when they see it. I think of smoke.  
Some say it's the devil's frozen

icon that hangs in this gallery.  
There's a light above the painting

that switches on off, on off.  
If you disgrace yourself, the rain

will enter your bloodstream and  
co-opt your thoughts of summer.

FYI to you whose favorite season  
is autumn—the harvest will fail you.

You'll get yourself kicked out  
of the museum of the fall.

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Sara Nicholson is the author of *The Living Method* (The Song Cave, 2014). She lives in Arkansas.